

Barney Glazer's
"HOLLYWOOD
HOTLINE"

The Friars Club Charity Foundation intermittently roasted and toasted George Jessel Nov. 20 at the new Century Plaza Hotel. A steam of celebrities sluiced in from entertainment capitals of the country to pan gold nuggets of pandemonium and laughter from the subject at and out of hand.

The event germinated from the seed of an idea and grew to an acre of poison ivy at the Century Plaza, once part of the 20th Century Fox studio lot where Jessel used to toil as a producer.

Set off by dozens of flame-spouting famous comedians, the searing fires were finally extinguished about 1 a.m. when the Friars seriously presented the veteran showman with a diamond pin set on a tiny gold piece. It bore the microscopic lettering, "George Jessel - Love - Friars."

Milton Berle said, "Jessel wasn't born. He was pledged at a United Jewish Relief dinner. George, you look like you did 40 years ago - old. I don't know how old you are but I hear you use Absorbine Sr."

"You haven't an enemy in the world. You outlived them all. You say you're 68? Why, your toupee is 68 years old. Jerry Lewis was supposed to be here but," looking at Dean Martin, "the dais took a vote. Frank Sinatra had the flu and that's strange for a man of 50 with

a body of 20. George, this is a great evening for you. If only you were alive to be here."

Judy Garland credited Jessel with picking her theatrical name and discarding her family name, Gumm. "I met you, George, when I was 9," said Judy. "You should have married me."

Tony Martin sang a nostalgic "September Song," kissed Jessel on the cheek and read a wire, "Zolst doo zeln mit glick. Zolst layben hoondert on footski yawr. Cyd Charisse."

The audience gave handsome, shy, serious Sandy Koufax a standing ovation. The ex-Dodger read a wire from Walter O'Malley, "Ask Jessel if he can pitch."

Dodger pitcher Don Drysdale praised Jessel seriously. George commented, "See! A good speech I get from a Goy!"

Carl Reiner announced, "I bought the rights to Jessel's lifestory. I don't want to produce it. I want to live it." Reiner recalled that every Jewish kid in his Bronx block wanted to be a Jessel, Cantor or Jolson. He added, "I'd like to invite Jessel to my home but we have a 17-year-old daughter."

Luscious Lainie Kazan, formerly Lainie Levine, sang a tribute to Georgie. Dean Martin urged, "Let's make her Italian." Red-haired, lilly white-skinned Greer Garson said, "Jessel

can introduce a queen or comedian with equal facility." Octogenarian Wolfie Gilbert sang a Jessel parody to his "Waitin' for the Robert E. Lee."

Maureen O'Hara remembered how she sizzled whenever George visited her set at 20th-Fox. He always used to rub the back of her neck. One day, Maureen protested loudly. A news columnist overheard her and published a story about a certain producer "who defiled young girls in Hollywood." Jessel

always talked about Ireland until one day Maureen asked, "How come you know so much about Ireland and so little about producing a picture?"

Bill Dana (my name is Hosi Himener) said, "Hor-hie Hessel was my Hebrew teacher in Herusalem." Ted Lewis donned his old battered top hat with the silver lining. Phil Silvers sang a perfect imitation of Jessel singing "My Mother's Eyes," with proper nasal twang, corner mouth twist,

slurring words and windup on a flat note.

Phil Harris said, "I don't know how old George is but when he was born the rabbi used a stone knife." Jan Murray tore the roof off by belaboring Jessel but then credited him with much of his success. Don Rickles, Merchant of Venom, said, "Mr. Jessel, you never helped my career. To tell you the truth, I didn't want to come here tonight."

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